

## Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /016 R

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DRAFTED BY: NEA:AGRIFFIN:JFC

APPROVED BY: NEA: MISS GRIFFIN

S/S-MR MACFARLANE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 037566 TOSEC 030080

EXDIS

FOL REPEAT OF CAIRO 1996 TO SECSTATE INFO TEL AVIV FEB 14

QTE:

S E C R E T CAIRO 1996

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, IS

SUBJECT: SINAI FIELD MISSION

REF: PARA 2, CAIRO 1980

1. SUMMARY: FAHMY EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT  
PUBLICITY ASPECTS OF SFM AND URGES USG REFUSE TO  
PERMIT PRESS VISITS TO SITE. PUBLICITY RESULTING  
FROM VISITS WILL BE SEIZED UPON BY SYRIA, LIBYA  
AND OTHER ARAB CRITICS FURTHER TO PILLORY SADAT.

NOTING WIDESPREAD AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL AND  
SECRET

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PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT AMERICAN PRESENCE IN

SINAI, I URGED GOE UNDERSTAND NEED FOR  
LEGITIMATE PRESS INTEREST IN SFM. FAHMY WANTS  
GOE CONCERN BROUGHT TO YOUR AND, IF  
NECESSARY, THE PRESIDENT'S ATTENTION. MEANWHILE,  
THORNE IS AWAITING DEPT'S GUIDANCE RE PROPOSED FEB 22 CEREMONY  
AND HANDLING PRESS REQUESTS TO VISIT SITE. END SUMMARY

2. AN IRATE FAHMY CALLED ME THIS MORNING TO SAY  
THAT GAMASY HAD TOLD HIM ABOUT PROPOSAL AS  
CONVEYED BY THORNE TO STAGE CEREMONY AT SFM SITE  
ON FEB 22, WHICH MIGHT BE ATTENDED BY THE PRESS AND  
TOON AND MYSELF. THIS WAS ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE  
TO GOE. ALTHOUGH GOE MAY NOT BE IN PHYSICAL  
CONTROL OF THE TERRITORY INVOLVED, HE HOPED  
USG IS NOT QUESTIONING EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY  
OVER SINAI.

3. IN AGREEING TO US SURVEILLANCE PRESENCE IN  
SINAI, GOE DID NOT WANT THIS TO BECOME A "CIRCUS"  
TO WHICH ALL AND SUNDRY WILL BE INVITED. GOE IS  
ALREADY BEING PILLORIED BY SYRIA, LIBYA AND OTHER  
ARAB CRITICS FOR AGREEING TO AMERICAN PRESENCE  
IN SINAI. TO MAKE A BIG SPLASH BY PERMITTING  
BEVY OF NEWSMEN TO ATTEND WILL ONLY ADD TO  
PROBLEMS WHICH GOE IS CURRENTLY FACING AS A  
RESULT OF SINAI II. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES,  
SHOULD TOON OR I VISIT SITE, EITHER TOGETHER OR  
SEPARATELY. SUCH VISITS WOULD ALSO BE WIDELY  
PUBLICIZED AND BE SEIZED UPON BY GOE CRITICS.  
IN FAHMY'S VIEW, SFM CAN DO ITS JOB WITHOUT HIGH  
LEVEL OF PUBLICITY.

4. I TOLD FAHMY THAT GOE MUST EXPECT LEGITIMATE  
AMERICAN AND FOREIGN PRESS INTEREST IN SFM OPERATION.  
WHILE EGYPTIANS CAN ON THEIR SIDE STOP NEWSMEN  
FROM GOING IN, NEITHER THEY NOR WE CAN STOP  
ISRAELIS FROM PERMITTING THEM IN. IN THIS  
CONNECTION, I MENTIONED IDF INVITATION TO FOREIGN  
PRESS ASSOCIATION TO VISIT SFM FEB 19 TO WITNESS  
AREA CAMP PULLBACK AND ASSOCIATION'S DESIRE ALSO  
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TO VISIT SFM CAMP (TEL AVIV 1069). WITH JOURNALISTS  
ALREADY COMING, THORNE HAD HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO  
AGREE (CAIRO 1917). I REMINDED HIM, MOREOVER  
THAT CBS, ABC AND NBC TV CREWS FROM ISRAEL HAD  
VISITED SFM SITE TWO WEEKS AGO. INDICATIVE OF  
STRONG PRESS INTEREST IN MATTER, WHEN INITIALLY  
REFUSED BY THORNE, TV COMPANIES HAD EVENTUALLY  
TAKEN MATTER TO WHITE HOUSE. LATTER, IN DEFERENCE

TO HIGH DEGREE OF AMERICAN PUBLIC INTEREST IN  
USG PRESENCE IN SINAI, HAD NO PRACTICAL CHOICE  
BUT TO AGREE. FAHMY MUST EXPECT THIS PUBLIC  
INTEREST TO CONTINUE. WHILE RECOGNIZING GOE  
SENSITIVITIES, I URGED EGYPTIANS ALSO UNDERSTAND  
NEED TO SATISFY LEGITIMATE PRESS INTEREST  
IN THIS OPERATION.

5. FAHMY WAS ADAMANT. HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO  
IDF INVITATION TO WITNESS ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL,  
BUT INSISTED VISIT TO SFM SITE IS SUBJECT TO  
USG APPROVAL AND SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN. GOE, HE  
STATED, WANTS TO MINIMIZE PUBLICITY FOR AMERICAN  
PRESENCE. SINAI II HAS GIVEN GOE ENOUGH PROBLEMS  
AND USG SHOULD NOT AGGRAVATE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES  
EGYPT FACES AS A RESULT OF THAT AGREEMENT. HE  
ASKED THAT I BRING MATTER TO YOUR ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY  
AND THAT, IF YOU CONSIDER IT NECESSARY, YOU TAKE  
IT UP WITH THE PRESIDENT. GOE, HE REPEATEDLY  
STRESSED, IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT PUBLICITY  
ASPECTS OF SFM.

6. I AGREED TO CONVEY HIS MESSAGE, BUT ALSO  
REMINDED HIM THAT EGYPT HAS OBTAINED  
TANGIBLE BENEFITS FROM SINAI II. THIS SIMPLY  
LED HIM BACK TO A RECITAL OF HOW HE HAD WARNED  
US ABOUT CONSEQUENCES OF WHAT WE WERE ASKED  
SADAT TO ACCEPT. AS WE WOULD RECALL, HE HAD OPPOSED  
SIGNING SINAI II AS IT WAS WORDED AND HAD  
SO ADVISED SADAT. ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT HAD  
OVERRULED HIM, SADAT IS NOW ALSO BEGINNING TO  
RECOGNIZE POLITICAL LIABILITIES WHICH SINAI II  
HAS MPOSED UPON HIM. IF USG MEANS WHAT IT SAYS  
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ABOUT WANTING TO STRENGTHEN SADAT'S POSITION IN  
ARAB WORLD, IT SHOULD AVOID ACTIONS WICH CAN  
ONLY LEAD TO FURTHER TARNISHING OF THE PRESIDENT'S  
POLITICAL IMAGE.

7. I AGAIN EMPHASIZED TO FAHMY OUR DESIRE TO  
STRENGTHEN SADAT'S POSITION IN ARAB WORLD. AT  
SAME TIME, I STRESSED THAT ALL OF US MUST  
RECOGNIZE LEGITIMATE PRESS INTEREST IN AMERICAN  
PRESENCE IN SINAI. WE MUST WORK OUT SOME HAPPY  
COMPROMISE TO MEET EGYPTIAN SENSITIVITIES AND  
USG REQUIREMENTS. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL ONLY  
GENERATE ADVERSE PUBLICITY, WHICH IS IN NEITHER OF  
OUR INTERESTS.

8. SINCE FAHMY HAS TAKEN SUBJECT OUT OF DIRECT  
EGYPTIAN MILITARY/THORNE LEVEL AND ASKED THAT  
I BRING IT TO YOUR PERSONAL ATTENTION, I AM DOING  
SO. I HAVE SHOWN THIS MESSAGE TO THORNE, WHO  
IS AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS FROM DEPT ON PROPOSED  
FEB 22 CEREMONY AND PRESS REQUESTS TO VISIT  
SITE.  
EILTSD UNQTE INGERSOLL

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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